

NEWS RELEASE

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Convicted Kankakee Men Face Lengthy Prison Terms for Violent Robberies in Kankakee, Peotone and Rantoul

Jury Convicts Four; Four Others Pled Guilty

Urbana, IL - After ten days of testimony, a federal jury deliberated 13 hours before returning 23 separate guilty verdicts against four Kankakee, Illinois men charged with conspiring together to commit at least five armed robberies of financial institutions and businesses in Kankakee, Peotone and Rantoul, Illinois, as announced by Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois. During the trial, which began October 30, 2006, the government presented evidence that more than \$400,000 was stolen from the financial institutions and businesses.

Following the verdicts, which were returned Friday afternoon, November 10, 2006, in Urbana, Chief U.S. District Judge Michael P. McCuskey scheduled sentencing for March 12, 2007 for those convicted: Brad O. Williams, age 27; Seville Williams, 24; Clinton Williams, 34; and Rory Tucker, 21. The jury convicted the four men of conspiracy to commit armed bank robbery and robbery and carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence.

Evidence presented by the government at trial demonstrated the central role defendant Brad Williams played in each of the robberies. In addition to the charge of conspiracy to commit armed robbery, Williams was convicted of four counts of armed robbery and four counts of carrying a firearm during a crime of violence, as well as being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Four additional co-defendants in the case: Marion Jefferson III, 20; Bobby L. Riley, 19; Ahshun T. Collins, 27; and Tyron Thomas, 21, had previously pled guilty to their participation in the conspiracy. Sentencing for Jefferson and Riley is scheduled February 2, 2007; February 1, 2007 for Collins; and January 12, 2007 for Thomas.

At sentencing, Williams faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 82 years to life imprisonment. Seville Williams, Tyron Thomas, Marion Jefferson and Clinton Williams each face a mandatory minimum 32 years to life in prison. Rory Tucker, Bobby Riley and Ahshun Collins each face a mandatory minimum of seven years to life imprisonment. The sentence each defendant will ultimately receive beyond any mandatory minimum sentence will be based on the court's application of the advisory federal sentencing guidelines.

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The jury found that the conspiracy began in or about November 2005 and continued to April 24, 2006, and included the following armed robberies:

January 3, 2006 - Brad and Seville Williams, armed with handguns, stole approximately \$2,700 from a Kankakee Walgreen's store. The defendants attempted to thwart law enforcement's response to the scene by causing a fictitious 911 call regarding a home invasion on the opposite side of town (armed robbery; carrying and using a firearm during a crime of violence);

January 11, 2006 - Brad and Seville Williams, armed with handguns, entered the Commonwealth Credit Union in Kankakee, threatened an employee and stole approximately \$313,000. Clinton Williams, Brad Williams' brother, drove Brad and Seville Williams from the credit union (armed bank robbery; carrying and using a firearm during a crime of violence);

March 28, 2006 - Brad Williams acted as a lookout while Thomas and Jefferson, both armed with handguns, entered Heights Finance in Kankakee, threatened employees and demanded money. Jefferson struck an employee in the head with the gun, causing the gun to discharge. Approximately \$200 was taken in the robbery (armed bank robbery; carrying and using a firearm during a crime of violence);

April 7, 2006 - Thomas and Jefferson entered the First Community Bank and Trust in Peotone, Illinois, and stole approximately \$100,000. Brad and Clinton Williams acted as lookouts and getaway drivers. Jefferson was armed with a handgun; and,

April 24, 2006 - Brad Williams, Thomas, Jefferson, and Collins, at least three of whom were armed with handguns, entered Community Plus Federal Credit Union in Rantoul, Illinois and stole approximately \$3,600. During the robbery, two employees were struck in the head by handguns. Clinton Williams, Tucker, and Riley acted as getaway drivers and lookouts (armed bank robbery; carrying and using a firearm during a crime of violence).

U.S. Attorney Heaton stated, "This gratifying outcome is the result of hundreds of hours of excellent investigative work, as well as the courageous testimony of several who were terrorized by these violent acts. Thanks to the tireless work of the trial team, led by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tim Bass, and the many local, state and federal investigators, this highly violent group of predators will not be in a position to terrorize Kankakee for decades."

Kankakee Police Chief Michael Kinkade said, "These defendants committed increasingly violent robberies putting victims, responding police officers, and the community at great risk because of the 'takeover' method used to commit the crimes. The Kankakee Police Department greatly appreciates the efforts by the U.S. Attorney's Office and state and local agencies which assisted our department in the task force to apprehend and prosecute these defendants making the community safer."

"The conviction of the defendants in this case is another chapter in the continuing investigation and prosecution of those responsible for these heinous crimes," ATF Special Agent in Charge Andrew Traver said. "This ring of conspirators was responsible for terrorizing numerous innocent victims and the convictions handed down are the just consequence of committing crimes of this severity. For the victims who have been affected, I hope that these convictions will give them some measure of solace in knowing that justice has been served."

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The charges were the result of a cooperative task force including the following participating agencies: Kankakee Police Department; Kankakee County State's Attorney's Office; Rantoul Police Department; United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of Illinois; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Kankakee County Sheriff's Department; Illinois State Police; Bradley Police Department; Bourbonnais Police Department; Grant Park Police Department; Herscher Police Department; Peotone Police Department; and, Manteno Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy A. Bass of the Urbana Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of Illinois.

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